

Brazil proposes South American broadband network

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Brazilian internet users at a cybercafe in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in 2010. Brazil on Tuesday proposed the creation of a fiber optic broadband connection network linking all South American countries to bring down the cost of Internet and cellular phone access.

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Addressing his fellow South American communications ministers, Brazil's Paulo Bernardo said the goal was to build "a ring of South American [fiber optic networks](#)" linking all countries of the region.

He noted that many regional countries were communicating with each other via the United States.

"It is an issue easy to resolve..It would cost \$60 million (45 million euros). We could do it in two years," he added.

"Connection costs for South American users represent on average between 35 and 40 percent of the total price of the service," Bernardo said.

"An [Internet provider](#) in South America pays, in the best of cases, three times more for the connection than in the United States. This situation must change urgently," he added.

The minister cited a Brazilian study indicating that a drop of four dollars in connection costs in Brazil would mean Internet access for an additional three million households.

"We have to create a South American solution for optic communication," he added.

Meanwhile, Colombia's Maria Emma Mejia, the secretary general of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), said it was important to involve the private sector in the initiative.

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